

AMENDMENT TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings replaces the original sheet including FIGS. 1 and 2. In the amendment, reference numeral 8 has been amended to reference numerals 8a and 8b.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS**Status of Claims**

Claims 1-9 are pending, of which claim 1 is independent.

Claims 1, 4, 5 and 7 have been amended to correct informalities in the claim language and to more clearly define the claimed subject matter. Claim 9 has been added. Support for the amendment and for the new claim is found, for example, at paragraph [0017] and Table 1 of the specification and Fig. 1.

Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings because Fig. 1 shows only reference numeral 8 for a disposed end plate while the specification refers to disposed end plates 8a and 8b. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment made to Fig. 1 overcomes this objection.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gorman et al. (USP 6,124,054) in view of Grot (USP 6,663,862). Claims 2, 3 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gorman et al. in view of Grot, and further in view of Corey et al (USP 6,632,553). Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gorman et al. in view of Grot, and further in view of Haga et al. (USP 5,330,956). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gorman et al. in view of Grot, and further in view of Sims et al. (USP 5,106,588). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner asserts that Grot discloses the purifying apparatus as recited by claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that the structure disclosed in Grot is directed to fuel cell electrodes, but not to a purifying apparatus. The catalyst in Grot does not purify an effluent discharged from the anode.

The Examiner also asserts that Gorman discloses the first and the second flow paths and outlet as recited by claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that Gorman discloses that an anode effluent is combusted in a catalyst purifying apparatus by using an oxidant discharged from a cathode, but fails to disclose the structure of the purifying apparatus. Therefore, Gorman fails to disclose that the effluent discharged from the anode is directed to the catalyst layer without being mixed with the air in advance. None of other cited references cure the deficiencies of Gorman.

As such, it is clear that, at a minimum, the combination of Grot and Gorman fails to disclose the above discussed limitations of claim 1, and none of other cited references cure the deficiencies of Grot and Gorman. Thus, claim 1 is patentable over Grot and Gorman. Since claims 2-8 depend upon claim 1, these claims are also patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

New Claim

Since claim 9 depends upon claim 1, this claim is patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Further, none of the cited references discloses the temperature range of 20 – 60 °C. As such, claim 9 is patentable for this reason in addition to the reasons set forth above.


CONCLUSION

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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